

a.) Amendment to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a dipeptide, which comprises:

allowing an enzyme source and a diketopiperazine wherein one or two kinds of α -amino acids or derivatives thereof are condensed with each other to be present in an aqueous medium, said enzyme source being a culture of a microorganism having the ability to produce a dipeptide, in which the proportion of one kind of dipeptide is 70% or more, from a diketopiperazine wherein two kinds of α -amino acids are condensed with each other or a treated matter of the culture;

allowing the dipeptide to form and accumulate in the aqueous medium; and

recovering the dipeptide from the aqueous medium (provided that the case in which the diketopiperazine is a diketopiperazine wherein aspartic acid and phenylalanine are condensed with each other and the dipeptide is aspartylphenylalanine is excluded).

Claim 2 (Cancelled).

3. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the microorganism having the ability to produce a dipeptide from a diketopiperazine wherein two kinds of α -amino acids are condensed with each other is a microorganism obtained by a method comprising:

[1] the step of culturing test microorganisms using a medium comprising a diketopiperazine wherein two kinds of α -amino acids are condensed with each other as the sole carbon source or nitrogen source;

[2] the step of selecting microorganisms which are recognized to grow in the above step [1]; and

[3] the step of selecting a microorganism which forms and accumulates a dipeptide in an aqueous medium when the diketopiperazine used in the above step [1] and the microorganisms selected in the above step [2] are allowed to be present in the aqueous medium.

4. (Currently Amended) The process according to ~~claim 2~~, claim 1, wherein the microorganism having the ability to produce a dipeptide from a diketopiperazine wherein two kinds of α -amino acids are condensed with each other is a microorganism obtained by a method comprising:

[1] the step of culturing test microorganisms using a medium comprising a diketopiperazine wherein two kinds of α -amino acids are condensed with each other as the sole carbon source or nitrogen source;

[2] the step of selecting microorganisms which are recognized to grow in the above step [1]; and

[3] the step of selecting a microorganism which forms and accumulates dipeptides in an aqueous medium, the proportion of one kind of dipeptide in the dipeptides

formed and accumulated being 70% or more, when the diketopiperazine used in the above step [1] and the microorganisms selected in the above step [2] are allowed to be present in the aqueous medium.

5. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the microorganism having the ability to produce a dipeptide from a diketopiperazine wherein two kinds of α -amino acids are condensed with each other is a microorganism belonging to the genus *Microbacterium*, *Sinorhizobium* or *Pseudomonas*.

6. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 5, wherein the microorganism ~~belonging to the genus *Microbacterium*~~ is *Microbacterium luteolum*.

7. (Original) A process for producing a dipeptide, which comprises:

allowing an enzyme source and a diketopiperazine wherein one or two kinds of α -amino acids or derivatives thereof are condensed with each other to be present in an aqueous medium, said enzyme source being a culture of a microorganism belonging to the genus *Microbacterium*, *Sinorhizobium* or *Pseudomonas* having the ability to produce a dipeptide from a diketopiperazine wherein two kinds of α -amino acids are condensed with each other or a treated matter of the culture;

allowing the dipeptide to form and accumulate in the aqueous medium; and

recovering the dipeptide from the aqueous medium.

8. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 7, wherein the microorganism ~~belonging to the genus *Microbacterium*~~ is *Microbacterium luteolum*.

9. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the α -amino acid is an α -amino acid selected from the group consisting of alanine, glutamine, glutamic acid, glycine, valine, leucine, isoleucine, proline, phenylalanine, tryptophan, methionine, serine, threonine, cysteine, asparagine, tyrosine, lysine, arginine, histidine, aspartic acid and ornithine.

10. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the two kinds of α -amino acids are alanine and glutamine, and the dipeptide is alanylglutamine.

11. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the treated matter of the culture is concentrated culture, dried culture, cells obtained by centrifuging the culture, or a product obtained by subjecting the cells to drying, freeze-drying, treatment with a surfactant, treatment with a solvent, enzymatic treatment, immobilization, mechanical friction or ultrasonication.

Claim 12 (Cancelled).